

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for creating and managing storage devices in a computer network having a plurality of computers, comprising creating a common storage device  
5 and a custom storage device, wherein the common storage device stores files that are used by the plurality of computers and the custom storage device stores files specific to an individual one of the plurality of computers.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the common storage device and the  
10 custom storage device are part of a storage area network.

3. A method for creating and managing a common storage device and a custom storage device within a computer network, the computer network having a plurality of computers, the method comprising:

15 performing an install sequence to create the common storage device and the custom storage device on the computer network;

updating the common storage device using an update sequence when it is determined that the common storage device needs updating; and

20 performing a boot sequence when it is determined that the one of the plurality of computers in the computer network has been rebooted.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein performing the install sequence comprises allowing an administrator to choose and create the common storage device and the custom storage device.

25 5. The method of claim 3, wherein performing the install sequence comprises creating on the custom storage device a volume group having logical volumes.

30 6. The method of claim 5, wherein default file systems are created and mounted.

7. The method of claim 3, performing the install sequence comprises populating a file system from the common storage device.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the common storage device contains files necessary to at least initially populate the custom storage device.

5 9. The method of claim 3, wherein the common storage device includes a primary common root storage device and an alternate common root storage device.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein updating the common root storage device comprises:

10 updating the alternate common root storage device;  
causing each of the plurality of computers to use the updated alternate common root storage device upon reboot;  
determining that each of the plurality of computers are using the updated alternate common root storage device;  
15 updating the primary common root storage device; and  
causing all of the plurality of computers to use the updated primary common root storage device upon reboot.

20 11. The method of claim 9, wherein performing a boot sequence comprises locating the boot code on the custom root storage device and then activating the custom root storage device.

25 12. The method of claim 9, wherein performing a boot sequence comprises activating at least one of the common root storage devices.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising determining that activation of the primary common root storage device was not successful and activating the alternate common root storage device.

30 14. The method of claim 12, further comprising determining that the primary common root storage device is marked for updating and activating instead the alternate common root storage device.

15. The method of claim 12, further comprising determining whether a level of the activated common root storage device level matches a level of the custom root storage device and, if not, then updating the operating system files on the custom root storage device based on the common root storage device level.

5

16. A storage device management system for creating and managing common root storage devices and custom root storage device in a computer network containing a plurality of computers, the storage device management system comprising:

10 a storage area network in communication with the plurality of computers, the storage area network comprising:

common root storage devices containing files common to each of the plurality of computers; and

15 custom root storage devices for each of the plurality of computers, each of the plurality of computers having a corresponding custom root storage device that contains files specific to the corresponding one of the plurality of computers.

17. The storage device management system of claim 16, wherein the common root storage devices include a primary common root storage device and an alternate common root storage device.

20